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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 002424

SIPDIS

DAKAR PLEASE PASS TO FAA ED JONES; DOT PLEASE PASS TO SUSAN MCDERMOTT, CORNELIA WILSON HUNTER, AND KEVIN SAMPLE; FAA PLEASE PASS TO FOREST RAWLS III; BRUSSELS PLEASE PASS TO TSA GERALD K. MOORE; HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER PLEASE PASS

SIPDIS  
TO TSA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10 YEARS  
TAGS: [EAID](#) [EAIR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [PTER](#) [NI](#)  
SUBJECT: DOES INSPIRATION MATTER? THE SAFE SKIES FOR AFRICA  
CONFERENCE NIGERIAN DELEGATION

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reasons 1.4 (b & d)

11. (U) Summary. The GON sent a three-member delegation to the Safe Skies for Africa Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa October 25-29; Lagos US Consulate Econoff also attended the event. The Nigerian delegation said, upon returning home, it would push for passage of a pending aviation bill and will seek to secure additional security equipment. The delegation believes both initiatives are critical toward meeting international aviation safety and security standards. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Department of Transportation (DOT) officials cautioned the GON to seek alternative sources for obtaining aviation equipment. U.S. assistance, they said, is shifting away from equipment transfers and moving toward training and capacity building. End summary.

12. (U) The Nigerian delegation (NIDEL) members to the Safe Skies for Africa (SSFA) Conference in Johannesburg October 25-29 were Mr. Desmond Ugwuegbulem, Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) Director of Airport Operations, Mrs. A.A. Faworaja, FAAN General Manager for Security, and Mr. Obi Anadu, FAAN General Manager for Murtala Muhammed International Airport.

WHO WILL FUND SECURITY EQUIPMENT?  
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13. (U) Throughout the conference, the NIDEL repeatedly raised the need for more security equipment to Econoff and US aviation officials. TSA and DOT officials replied that future USG contributions for aviation security in Nigeria mostly will be in training and consultation rather than security equipment itself. The US has already provided USD 3.2 million in aviation security equipment to Nigeria through the DOT Nigerian Transportation Project.

14. (SBU) GON aviation officials need to realize that they have to take greater responsibility for purchasing their own equipment and that they should not place undue reliance on the US to transfer equipment to them. At the November 11 US-Nigeria bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) talks in Abuja, an uninvited MOA official waited outside the conference room for several hours to deliver a request that we supply Nigeria with additional aviation security equipment.

15. (SBU) According to DOT, however, Nigeria has received more equipment than any other African nation. DOT has provided Nigeria new passenger screening equipment, explosive trace detectors, and hand held and metal detectors for all four major international airports (Lagos, Abuja, Kano, and Port Harcourt). In addition, DOT has trained 300 personnel on the use of the equipment, and has provided maintenance contracts for all the equipment. DOT thinks its role in helping to equip Nigerian airports with state of the art passenger and cargo screening equipment has been fulfilled.

16. (SBU) Comment. Following years of equipment transfers, Nigerian aviation officials have in place new state of the art security equipment at all major international airports. The major concerns now are the maintenance of the equipment and of the training levels of the personnel using the equipment. Additionally, equipping airports with similar equipment is an important concern. DOT had recommended to Nigerian MOA officials that the older equipment removed from the international airports be placed at appropriate domestic airports. The time has come for Nigerian aviation officials to identify alternate funding sources for additional security equipment. Nigeria might raise funds for equipment through airport taxes or a budget allotment on an annual basis. DOT believes that Nigeria has in place the foundation for becoming a world-class aviation hub on the security side. Flight safety concerns remain to be addressed. End comment.

PUSH FOR CIVIL AVIATION BILL

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17. (U) NIDEL members told Econoff that passage of civil aviation legislation stalled in the National Assembly is necessary for further progress towards meeting international aviation standards. (Amembassy Abuja will send a copy of the draft bill to US FAA legal experts to determine if it meets ICAO standards. If so, this will be an important step in creating an aviation regulatory environment that will comply with the requirements for reaching FAA Category One status.)

18. (SBU) NIDEL member, Ugwuegbulem, told Econoff he will do his part to encourage passage of adequate legislation. He plans to inform the new MD of FAAN, Alhaji Gambo Umar, of its importance in the hope that Umar will, in turn, stress its importance to MOA. MOA will then work with National Assembly members to pass the bill.

19. (C) Comment. A strong aviation sector in Nigeria would benefit both US and Nigerian interests. Direct routes between the US and Nigeria would result in improved market access and increased trade. We were pleased with the enthusiasm the NIDEL displayed at the SSFA Conference. However, the trio probably does not have the bureaucratic clout and influence to change budget allocations or effect legislation. Notwithstanding NIDEL apparent buy-in, we suspect SSFA Conference messages and ideas will not resonate loudly at the MOA where the true impetus for change must come. As a result, it may be some time before Nigeria attains the aviation stature it covets and the concomitant economic openness that stature would help produce. End comment.

110. (U) This cable has been cleared by Amembassy Abuja.

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